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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER AND AF/SE NATSIOS, NSC FOR
PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SU](#) [CG](#) [UG](#) [CT](#)

SUBJECT: LRA ENTERS CAR, SPLA AND UPDF PLAN MILITARY ACTION

AGAINST WHILE GOSS PURSUES PEACE TALKS

Classified By: DCM R. Powers, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Reports have proliferated in southern Sudan that Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has entered the Central African Republic (CAR) with a small force. However, the senior Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) official with responsibility for the LRA says while some LRA elements have crossed into CAR, Kony's presence there is unconfirmed. According to SPLA Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Oyai Deng, SPLA and the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF) are planning anti-LRA actions east of the Nile in southern Sudan after the current Cessation of Hostilities Agreement lapses February 28. The Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) is nevertheless persisting in efforts to restart peace talks between the LRA and the Government of Uganda (GOU). End Summary.

Movement into CAR

12. (C) SPLA Maj. Gen. Wilson Deng told PolOff February 27 that LRA elements have "definitely" entered CAR over the last week. A senior advisor to GOSS VP Riak Machar, mediator in the stalled LRA peace talks, reported the same February 24. Deng estimated that there are 200-300 LRA personnel now in CAR. Machar's advisor, Prof. George Achor, said SPLA and civilian authorities in remote southwestern Sudan had confirmed the movement of LRA forces into CAR, including an "advance party" and subsequent groups who transported arms and provisions.

13. (C) Although there are widespread reports that LRA leader Joseph Kony has also moved to CAR from his previous base in the DRC's Garamba National Park, Maj. Gen. Deng cautions that Kony's whereabouts have not been established definitively. Deng nevertheless said he "suspects" Kony is in CAR, and said the LRA is attempting to establish a base somewhere near Obo in southeastern CAR. Kony has operated from southern Sudan for most of the last two decades. In November 2005, however, he and other senior LRA leadership relocated from southern Sudan to northern DRC.

14. (C) On February 24 SPLA forces observed a "small" LRA group near the Ri-Kwangba assembly point on the DRC-Sudan border, Deng said. This group was probably acting as a cover for a larger movement into CAR, Deng said. As of February 28, UNMIS security personnel were also attempting to verify an unconfirmed report of an LRA group camped approximately 30 kilometers from Nagero in southern Sudan's Western Equatoria State, approximately 100 kilometers from the CAR border. Local officials have reportedly closed the road between Tambura, in Western Equatoria, and the CAR border. The UN

has imposed new restrictions on the movement of UN personnel in parts of the area. The UN also reports "credible information of LRA movement northwards between Nazara and Ezo and then westwards into CAR bypassing Tambura to the north."

End of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement

15. (C) With the February 28 expiration of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, SPLA Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Oyai Deng says his forces are ready to remove against remaining LRA elements east of the Nile in southern Sudan. It is unclear how many LRA bands remain in those areas. Maj. Gen. Deng was in Nimule, near the Uganda-Sudan border, on February 27 to review operational plans and consult with the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF). The UPDF have operated against the LRA in southern Sudan since 2002, and collaborate with the SPLA in securing the Nimule-Juba road, a vital transportation link for southern Sudan and frequent venue of attacks by the LRA and other armed groups (OAGs). The LRA have also carried out extensive food raids in ethnic Acholi areas east of the Nile since last December.

16. (C) Sources in the SPLA also claim to have verified that some LRA groups have moved "deeper" into DRC. These sources do not specify the location of the LRA groups. In late January, SPLA Maj. Gen. Bior Ajang attended a meeting with senior defense and intelligence counterparts from the UPDF and Congo's FARDC at Arua in northwestern Uganda. Bior told us that the meeting focused only on the LRA, and that the parties attempted to agree on a strategy to contain or eliminate the Ugandan rebel group. The meeting was useful, Bior said, but FARDC continues to object to the participation by UPDF or SPLA in anti-LRA actions in DRC.

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Chissano Back to the Region

17. (C) A Sudanese official attached to the stalled LRA peace talks told us February 27 he expects former Mozambique president Joaquim Chissano to come to Juba in early March. Chissano is the UN's special representative for the LRA problem. The Sudanese official said he had also been advised that Chissano might also be considering a visit to Kinshasa.

Attempts to Restart Peace Talks

18. (C) Despite the end of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and other negative developments, GOSS officials persist in efforts to re-start peace talks. These efforts are hampered by reported splits within the LRA delegation, with some prepared to resume talks in Juba and a group of hardliners opposed. GOSS VP Machar said February 24 he was still hopeful talks could resume, and an aide told us GOSS had purchased airplane tickets for an LRA delegation to return to Juba. The aide was also hopeful that the LRA delegation would participate in a large meeting for ethnic Acholi leaders planned for Juba March 2-4. Most LRA members and captives are ethnic Acholi, drawn from a population that straddles the Uganda-Sudan border.

19. (C) Comment: The spread of the LRA problem into a fourth country is indicative both of the difficult circumstances facing the group and the continuing danger they pose to regional stability. GOSS efforts to broker peace talks deserve support. So do other efforts that would make peace attractive to the LRA's obdurate leadership. End Comment.
HUME